

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – III Issue –IV (July-August) 2025

Frequency: Bimonthly



ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN BO CITY, SOUTHERN SIERRA LEONE.

Matthew Tommy Hanson¹, Tony Patrick George^{2*}, Peter Brima Myers³

¹ Department of sociology and social work school of social sciences and Law Njala university,

^{2,3} Department of Teacher Education, School of Basic Education Njala University

| **Received:** 06.08.2025 | **Accepted:** 12.08.2025 | **Published:** 19.08.2025

***Corresponding author:** Tony Patrick George

Department of Teacher Education, School of Basic Education Njala University

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education for children with learning disabilities in Bo City, Southern Sierra Leone. The study targets an estimated number of seventy (70) participants and teachers drawn from three (3) selected primary schools in Bo City. A purposive sampling technique was used to examine the total population of teachers, whilst a simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents from parents and education stakeholders. The findings of the research indicated that teachers generally have positive attitudes towards inclusive education. Many participants believe that inclusive classrooms provide a more diverse and enriching learning environment for all children, including those with learning disabilities. The research findings also indicated that a substantial portion of the participants acknowledged and valued the endeavours undertaken to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to support children with learning disabilities in inclusive classroom environments effectively. This favourable reaction implies that the training initiatives implemented by educational institutions or relevant organisations have proven to be successful in providing teachers with the essential competencies required for inclusive education. The study recommends that school administrators should organise regular training sessions and workshops for teachers on inclusive education and strategies for supporting children with learning disabilities.

Keywords: attitudes, teachers, inclusive education, learning disabilities in Southern Sierra Leone

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of inclusion refers to the integration of children with special education needs into educational environments that are the least restrictive, as mandated by United Nations declarations that uphold the right of all children to receive appropriate education (Ydo, 2020). Special needs education incorporates pedagogical principles that have been proven effective and beneficial for all children. It recognizes that human differences are a regular part of society and, therefore, learning should be tailored to meet the individual needs of each child, rather than expecting the child to conform to predetermined assumptions about the pace and nature of the learning process (Woolfson, 2024). The attitudes of teachers toward the implementation of inclusive education for children with learning disabilities have been the subject of significant research and discussion. Several studies have highlighted a range of attitudes among teachers, which can vary from positive and supportive to negative and resistant. One study conducted by Lindner et al (2023) found that many teachers hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education for children with learning disabilities. These teachers believe that inclusive classrooms provide opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their peers, fostering social integration and promoting a sense of belonging. They view inclusive education as a means to create a more inclusive society and advocate for equal educational opportunities for all students.

However, other studies have revealed a less favourable attitude among some teachers toward the implementation of inclusive education. For instance, a study conducted by Matthew et al. (2021) found that some teachers expressed concerns about the potential impact of inclusive education on their workload and the overall classroom environment. These teachers believed that catering to the diverse needs of students with learning disabilities could be challenging and time-consuming, leading to a strain on their resources and abilities to meet the needs of all students. Moreover, negative attitudes toward inclusive education for children with learning disabilities have also been linked to a lack of training and support. In a study by Krämer et al (2021), it was found that teachers who reported feeling unprepared to implement inclusive education strategies were more likely to hold negative attitudes. These teachers expressed concerns about their ability to effectively support students with learning disabilities, leading to a reluctance to embrace inclusive practices fully.

Despite the variations in attitudes, research has also shown that teachers' attitudes can be influenced and changed through professional development and support. A study by Herzig Johnson (2023) demonstrated that teachers who received training and ongoing support in inclusive education reported more positive attitudes and increased confidence in their ability to teach students with learning disabilities effectively. Based on the aforementioned observations, this discussion will focus on the perspectives of educators regarding the integration of inclusive education for primary school children with learning disabilities. The examination will be organized into the following thematic categories.

The implementation of inclusive education for children with learning disabilities in Sierra Leone has faced significant obstacles. These challenges stem from a variety of factors, including limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and societal stigmatization. According to the TSC (2019), there are approximately 48,000 students with disabilities, which accounts for 1.5% of the total school enrollment across all levels of education. Among these levels, the primary level has the highest number of schools with disabled

students enrolled. The primary level also has the highest percentage of schools with disabled students enrolled. As of 2019, Sierra Leone has a total of 11,168 schools, with 7,154 of them being primary schools. Remarkably, around 50% of all schools in Sierra Leone have at least one student with a disability enrolled, as reported by the Annual School Census in 2019. Despite these challenges, efforts have been made to address these issues and promote inclusive education in the country.

Sierra Leone has placed significant importance on the educational rights of children and has taken a leading role in promoting inclusive education. This has been achieved by establishing special units within regular public primary schools in the country. The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education, issued by Ainscow et al (2019), emphasized the necessity for schools to adapt and cater to the diverse needs of all learners. Furthermore, the United Nations Convention has recognized inclusive education as both a legal and human right. Educationists and human rights activists have expressed particular concern regarding the issue of Education for All (EFA). The philosophy of inclusive education ensures that schools' learning environments and educational systems are designed to meet the diverse needs of all learners, regardless of their learning difficulties or disabilities. Consequently, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has made concerted efforts to promote the education of children with learning disabilities in the country. This is achieved through the implementation of educational programs that consider the wide range of learners with special educational needs.

One notable initiative is the introduction of specialized education units within regular schools. These units are designed to provide personalized assistance and accommodations for students with learning disabilities, enabling them to receive education alongside their peers. In a study conducted by Koroma et al (2019), the establishment of these special education units has resulted in enhanced enrollment and retention rates for children with learning disabilities in mainstream schools in Sierra Leone.

Moreover, there have been efforts to develop teacher training programs aimed at equipping educators with the necessary skills to support students with learning disabilities. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with international organizations, has implemented training workshops and seminars to enhance teachers' understanding of inclusive education and effective teaching strategies for children with learning disabilities (Bombardelli, 2020). This investment in teacher training has played a significant role in improving the quality of education received by children with learning disabilities in Sierra Leone.

2. Methodology

The research design for this study was a descriptive survey design, as it aims to evaluate the factors impacting the implementation of inclusive education for children with learning disabilities in Gbitima Layout. The decision to opt for a descriptive survey design stems from the need to ensure accuracy and minimize bias in the data collection process, thereby enhancing the

Reliability of the evidence gathered by Kapur (2018). This research approach primarily focuses on gathering information that describes existing phenomena by eliciting individuals' opinions, attitudes, and values. It proves valuable in illuminating the conditions or relationships between variables (Cohen et al, 2017). Consequently, considering the objectives of this study, a descriptive survey research method was deemed suitable for comprehensively

assessing the factors affecting the successful implementation of inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Objective of the Study

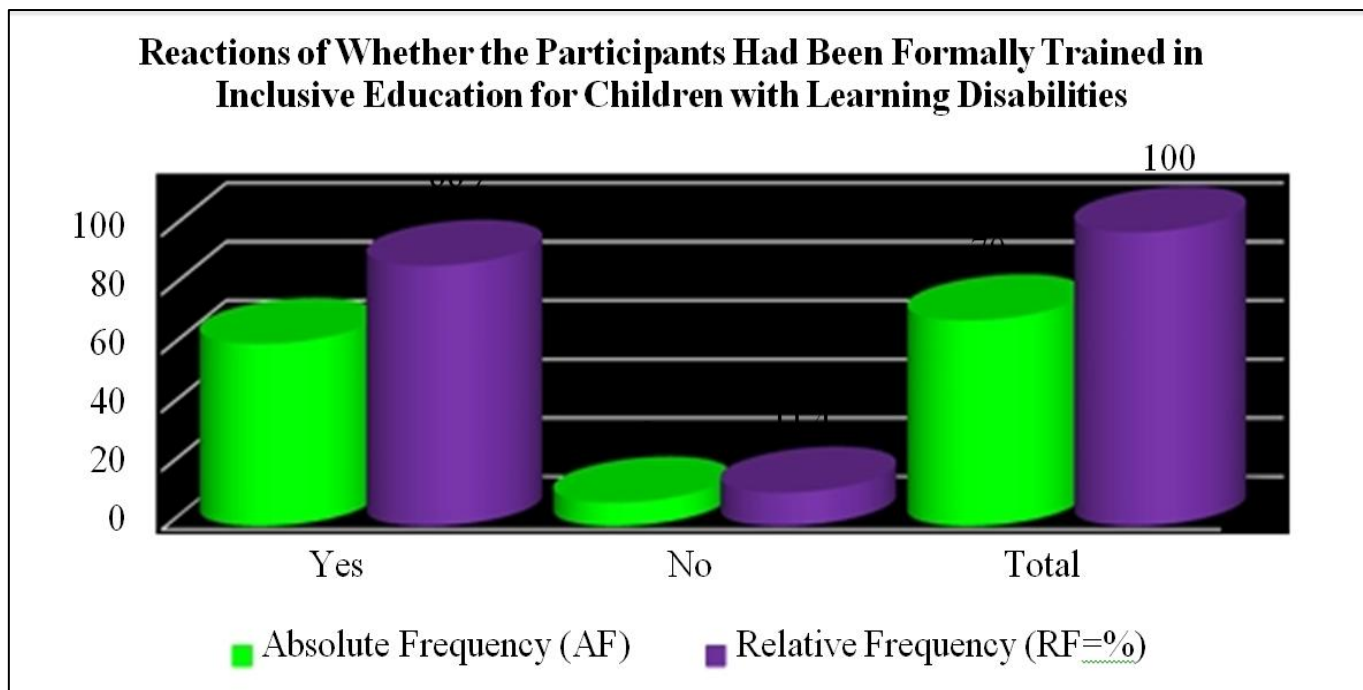
1. To examine teachers' perceptions and responses regarding their formal training in inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.
2. To assess the nature and frequency of training and professional development sessions received by teachers on inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

3. To examine the support provided by school administrators and educational policies to teachers for implementing inclusive education practices for children with learning disabilities
4. To identify and analyze the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Research Objective 1

1. To examine teachers' perceptions and responses regarding their formal training in inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Figure 1



Source: Research Data 2025

The data presented in Figure 1 reveal important insights regarding the perspectives of the participants on the formal training received by teachers in inclusive education for children with learning disabilities. Out of the total number of respondents, which amounted to 70 individuals, a substantial majority of 62 respondents, accounting for 88.6% of the total participants, expressed their agreement with the statement that teachers have received adequate training in inclusive education for children with learning disabilities. This finding indicates that a significant proportion of the participants recognise and appreciate the efforts made in providing teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to support students with learning disabilities in inclusive classroom settings effectively. This positive response suggests that the training initiatives implemented by educational institutions or relevant organisations have been effective in equipping teachers with the competencies required for inclusive education.

On the other hand, contrasting opinions were held by a minority of respondents. Out of the 70 Participants, eight individuals, representing (11.4%) of the total, expressed their disagreement or

doubt regarding the adequacy of formal training received by teachers in inclusive education for children with learning disabilities. This minority perspective suggests that there may still be some room for improvement in terms of the training programs provided to teachers, as they may not fully meet the expectations or needs of these particular respondents.

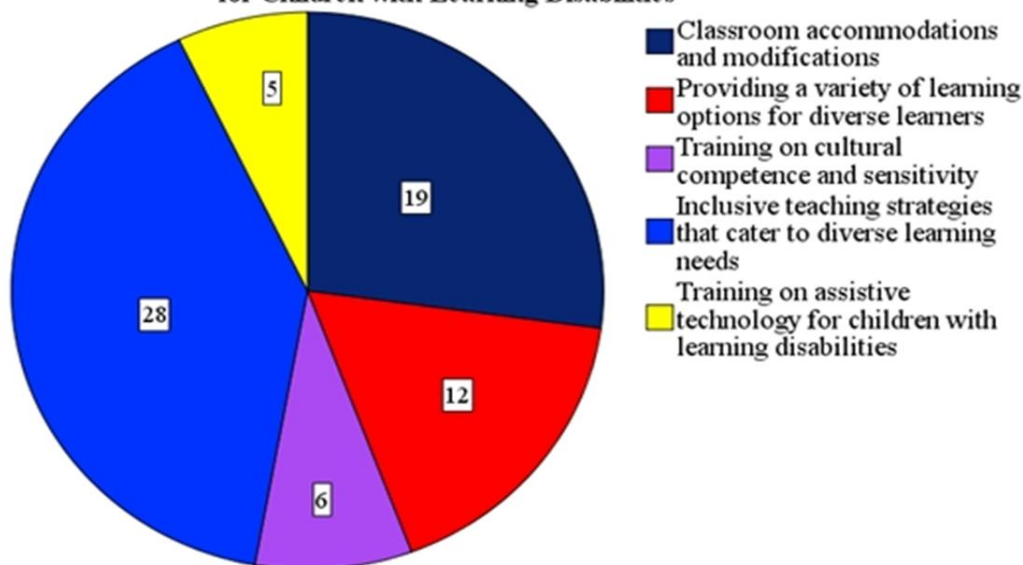
However, it is important to note that the study does not delve into the specific reasons behind the contrasting opinions, and further investigation may be required to understand the underlying factors influencing these perspectives. Nonetheless, the stark contrast between the majority agreement and the minority disagreement indicates that, overall, the majority of participants have a positive perception of the formal training received by teachers in inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Research Objective 2

To assess the nature and frequency of training and professional development sessions received by teachers on inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Figure 2

Training and Professional Development Sessions Received by Teachers on Inclusive Education for Children with Learning Disabilities



Source: Research Data 2025

The findings depicted in Figure 2 demonstrate various insights from the study. According to the results, a significant proportion of the respondents, 28 (40.0%), acknowledged the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies that address the diverse learning needs of students. These strategies were attributed to the training and professional development sessions attended by teachers about inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Additionally, 19 (27.1%) of the study participants emphasized the importance of classroom accommodations and modifications to facilitate inclusive learning environments. In comparison, 12 (17.1%) of the respondents highlighted the significance of offering

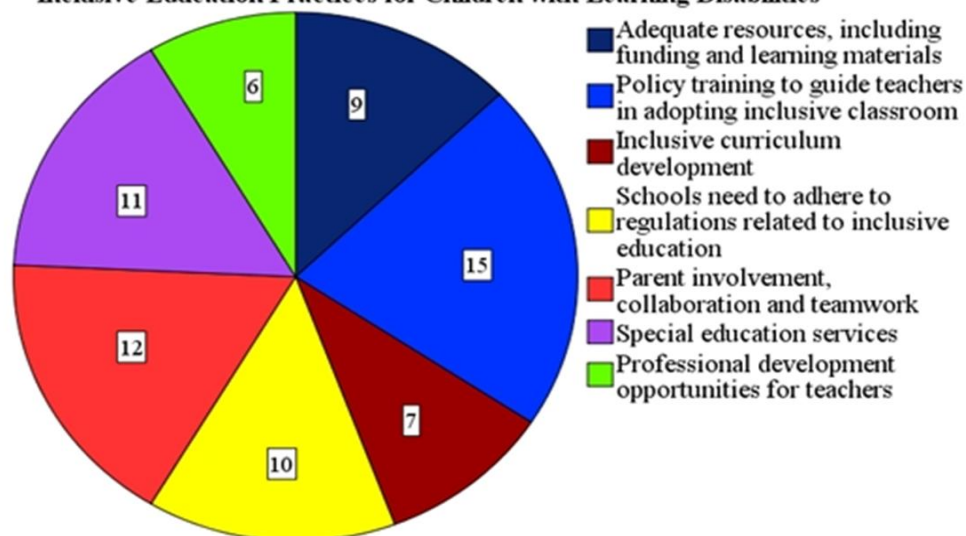
a range of learning options to cater to the needs of diverse learners. Furthermore, 6 (8.6%) of the research subjects emphasized the importance of training on cultural competence and sensitivity. In comparison, 5 (7.1%) of the sampled participants highlighted the importance of training on assistive technology for children with learning disabilities.

Research Objective 3

To examine the support provided by school administrators and educational policies to teachers for implementing inclusive education practices for children with learning disabilities

Figure 3

Support that Teachers Received from School Administrators and Policies to Implement Inclusive Education Practices for Children with Learning Disabilities



Source: Research Data 2025

The findings of the study, as depicted in Figure 3, demonstrate various factors that contribute to Implementing inclusive education practices for children with learning disabilities. Among the respondents, 15 individuals (21.4%) emphasized the significance of

policy training for teachers, which is crucial in fostering inclusive classrooms. These teachers also acknowledged the support they received from school administrators and the policies in place to facilitate inclusive education. Additionally, 12 respondents (17.1%)

highlighted the importance of parent involvement, collaboration, and teamwork in promoting inclusive education. They recognised the role parents play in supporting their children's learning experiences. Furthermore, Eleven participants (15.7%) mentioned the significance of special education services in facilitating inclusive education practices. These services provide essential support to students with learning disabilities, ensuring their needs are met within the inclusive classroom setting.

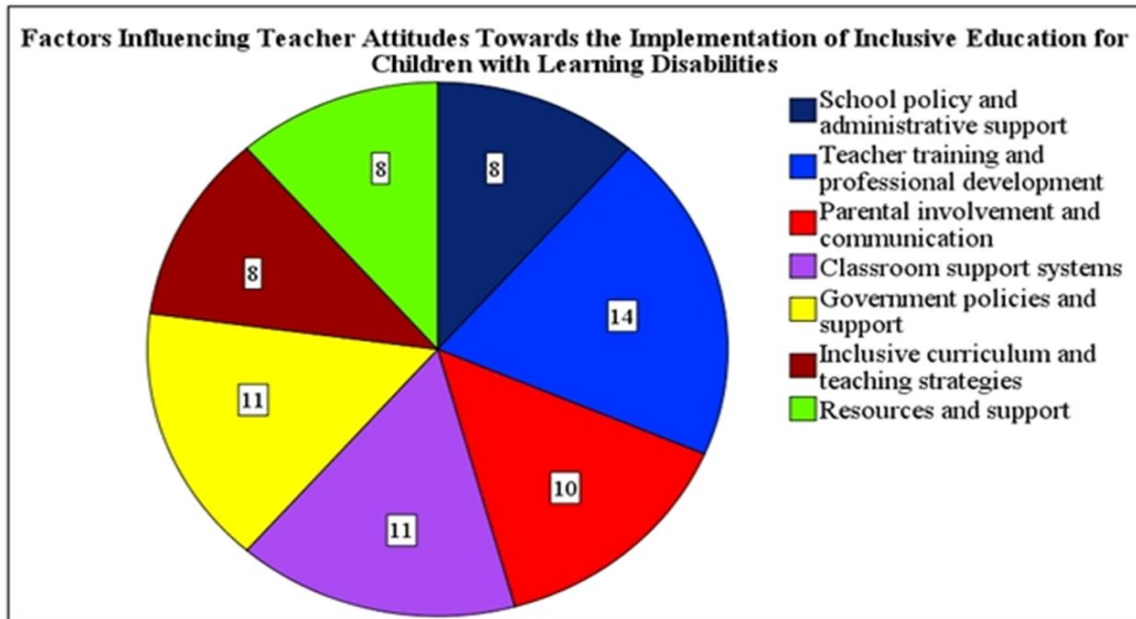
Moreover, 10 respondents (14.3%) emphasized the necessity for schools to adhere to regulations related to inclusive education. Compliance with these regulations ensures that inclusive practices are implemented effectively and consistently. Furthermore, nine individuals (12.9%) identified the availability of adequate resources,

including funding and learning materials, as a crucial factor in supporting inclusive education. These resources enable teachers to provide quality education to students with learning disabilities. Lastly, six respondents (8.6%) highlighted the importance of professional development opportunities for teachers. These opportunities enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive education practices, ultimately benefiting students with learning disabilities.

Research Objective 4

To identify and analyze the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Figure 4



Source: Research Data 2025

This information from Figure 4 indicates that the training and professional development of teachers play a crucial role in shaping their attitudes towards inclusive education for children with learning disabilities. Based on the responses of 14 participants, which represent 20.0% of the total respondents, it is clear that these individuals recognize the importance of continuous learning and development for educators when it comes to inclusive practices. Additionally, 11 Participants (15.7%) believe that classroom support systems are essential in fostering an inclusive environment. This highlights the significance of creating a supportive and nurturing classroom setting that addresses the diverse needs of all students. Another 11 participants (15.7%) Emphasize the role of government policies and support in promoting inclusive education. This suggests that participants recognize the need for systemic changes and governmental backing to ensure that inclusive practices are effectively implemented in schools.

Parental involvement and communication were recognized as crucial factors by 10 individuals. (14.3%). This indicates that participants understand the importance of collaboration between parents and educators in order to support the learning and development of children with learning disabilities.

School policy and administrative support were highlighted by eight respondents (11.4%). This underscores the significance of having school-level policies and administrative structures in place that

promote and support inclusive education. An equal number of participants (11.4%) emphasised the value of an inclusive curriculum and effective teaching strategies. This suggests that participants recognized the need for educators to use inclusive teaching approaches and curriculum materials that cater to the individual needs of students with learning disabilities.

Lastly, eight members of the targeted population (11.4%) acknowledged the value of resources and support. This indicates that participants understand that having access to appropriate resources and support systems is essential in providing inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Result and Discussion

These findings have significant implications for educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in inclusive education. The positive feedback from the majority of participants affirms the progress made in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge for inclusive education. It validates the investment in training programs and provides evidence in support of the continued efforts to enhance teacher preparation in this area. At the same time, the concerns raised by the minority opinions underscore the need for continuous evaluation and improvement of the training programs. It is crucial to listen to the viewpoints of these individuals and consider their feedback to address any potential gaps or shortcomings in the existing training initiatives. By addressing

these concerns, educational institutions can ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to meet the diverse needs of children with learning disabilities in inclusive settings.

The objective of the study was to identify the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education for children with learning disabilities in the study area. The research findings have provided valuable insights into the perspectives of teachers regarding inclusive education for children with learning disabilities within the study area. By examining the attitudes held by teachers towards the integration of students with special needs into mainstream classrooms, the study has shed light on the current state of inclusive education practices.

One of the key findings of the research is that teachers generally have positive attitudes towards inclusive education. Many participants believe that inclusive classrooms provide a more diverse and enriching learning environment for all children, including those with learning disabilities. The research findings also indicated that a substantial portion of the participants acknowledged and valued the endeavours undertaken to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to support children with learning disabilities in inclusive classroom environments effectively. This favourable reaction implies that the training initiatives implemented by educational institutions or relevant organizations have proven to be successful in providing teachers with the essential competencies required for inclusive education.

Based on the statistical insights presented, it can be asserted that in Sierra Leone, teachers have undergone training and professional sessions focused on inclusive education for children with learning disabilities. These sessions have equipped teachers with inclusive teaching strategies that address the diverse learning needs of their students. Notably, the training sessions have emphasized the significance of establishing a positive and inclusive classroom environment. The findings of this study align with the research conducted by Messiou et al (2025), which advocates for teachers to cultivate a sense of belonging and acceptance among all students, irrespective of their learning disabilities, Demie (2021). This can be accomplished by promoting peer collaboration and cooperative learning activities, where students with learning disabilities collaborate with their peers to solve problems and accomplish tasks (Millis, 2023). Furthermore, teachers have received training on providing constructive feedback and praise that focuses on effort and progress rather than solely on academic performance (Mandouit & Hattie, 2023). By establishing a positive and inclusive in a classroom environment, teachers can effectively support the social and emotional well-being of students with learning disabilities and facilitate their overall development. The training, as revealed by the study, encompasses familiarity with pertinent laws and policies about inclusive education, strategies for cultivating a positive and An inclusive classroom atmosphere, appropriate approaches for evaluating the progress of students with learning disabilities, as well as instruction on the identification and Acknowledgement of children with learning disabilities and the management of inclusive education classrooms.

The research participants identified several strategies employed by teachers to assist children with learning disabilities, including implementing flexible seating arrangements, consistently monitoring and providing feedback, fostering a positive and inclusive classroom culture, and maintaining regular communication with parents of children who have learning disabilities. Moreover, the research revealed that educators

understand the importance of adapting their instructional methods to meet the unique needs of students with learning disabilities. This includes using differentiated instruction, providing individualized support, implementing assistive technology, and employing various teaching strategies to accommodate different learning styles. The study also highlighted the significance of school policies and administrative assistance in fostering inclusive education. When schools have clear policies in place that prioritize inclusion and provide necessary resources and support, educators feel empowered to teach students with learning disabilities effectively.

Based on the statistical insights presented, it can be concluded that school administrators actively Support teachers through the provision of professional development and training opportunities. Notably, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, along with other relevant stakeholders, organizes workshops and seminars focused on inclusive education strategies and techniques. These training sessions effectively equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to establish inclusive classrooms and effectively address the diverse needs of students with learning disabilities. Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that school administrators also establish support systems within schools to aid teachers in implementing inclusive practices. This may involve the appointment of special education coordinators or resource teachers who can offer guidance and assistance to classroom teachers. By collaborating with teachers, these coordinators can contribute to the development of individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with learning disabilities, ensuring that their specific needs are adequately addressed

Additionally, administrative assistance in the form of understanding and support from school administrators is crucial in creating a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students. Teacher training and professional growth were identified as key factors in shaping educators' attitudes and abilities to implement inclusive education. When teachers receive proper training and professional development opportunities that specifically address teaching students with learning disabilities, they are better equipped to meet their needs. Ongoing professional growth helps educators stay current with best practices and allows them to refine their instructional approaches continuously. Parental engagement and communication were found to be essential components of successful inclusive education. When parents are actively involved in their child's education and have open lines of communication with teachers, it strengthens the partnership between home and school. This collaboration enables educators to effectively address the individual needs and goals of students with learning disabilities. Classroom support systems, such as the presence of teaching assistants or special education professionals, were identified as crucial elements in facilitating inclusive education. These support systems provide additional guidance and assistance to both the teacher and the student, ensuring that all learners have access to necessary accommodations and support.

From the aforementioned findings, one can deduce that the successful Implementation of inclusive classroom practices for students with learning disabilities in Sierra Leone necessitates the collaboration between school administrators and policymakers. By enacting inclusive educational policies, providing avenues for professional growth, establishing support systems, and allocating essential resources, educational institutions can cultivate an An inclusive atmosphere that addresses the unique requirements of all students, particularly those With learning disabilities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the study's stated objectives and a comprehensive analysis incorporating both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, the subsequent conclusions have been determined that the implementation of inclusive education for children with learning disabilities is influenced by various factors including teachers' attitudes, and availability of resources, the study concludes that teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of inclusive education. Their beliefs and attitudes towards children with learning disabilities greatly affect the quality of support provided to these students. If teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education, they are more likely to be committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for students with learning disabilities. On the other hand, negative attitudes can hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education and create barriers for children with disabilities.

The subsequent recommendations, which are informed by the aforementioned study, are intended for policy deliberations by various stakeholders within the nation, based on the findings and conclusions derived from the study.

School administrators should organize regular training sessions and workshops for teachers on inclusive education and strategies for supporting children with learning disabilities. This will help teachers develop the necessary skills and knowledge to implement inclusive education practices effectively. School administrators should work with education authorities to develop and implement policies that support inclusive education. These policies should address issues such as curriculum adaptation, assessment accommodations, and the provision of support services for children with learning disabilities.

School administrators should encourage collaboration between teachers, special education professionals, and other support staff. This can be done through regular team meetings, joint planning sessions, and co-teaching initiatives. This collaboration will help ensure that the needs of children with learning disabilities are effectively addressed.

Schools, administrators, and teachers should ensure that schools have physical accessibility features such as ramps, handrails, and accessible toilets to accommodate children with physical disabilities. Additionally, provide assistive technologies and learning resources that are accessible to children with learning disabilities.

Governments and NGOs should allocate sufficient funding to support inclusive education for children with learning disabilities. This includes funding for teacher training, specialized

resources, and support services. Governments should develop and implement inclusive education policies that prioritize the rights and needs of children with learning disabilities. These policies should focus on removing barriers to inclusion, promoting access to quality education, and ensuring equal opportunities for all children.

Educational institutions, communities, and parents should work together to establish a collaborative approach towards inclusive education. This can be done by organizing regular meetings, workshops, and training sessions to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices. Educational institutions should provide regular professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting students with learning disabilities. This can include training on inclusive

teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, and assistive technologies.

REFERENCES:

1. Ainscow, M., Slee, R., & Best, M. (2019). The Salamanca statement: 25 years on. *International Journal of inclusive education*, 23(7-8), 671-676.
2. Bombardelli, O. (2020). Inclusive education and its implementation: International practices. *Education and Self Development*, 15(3), 37-46.
3. Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). The search for causation. In *Research methods in education* (pp. 87-108). Routledge.
4. Herzig Johnson, S. (2023). The role of teacher self-efficacy in the implementation of inclusive practices. *Journal of School Leadership*, 33(5), 516-534.
5. Kapur, R. (2018). Research methodology: Methods and strategies. *Department of Adult Education and Continuing Extension, University of Delhi: New Delhi, India*.
6. Koroma, A. S., Ghatahora, S. K., Ellie, M., Kargbo, A., Jalloh, U. H., Kandeh, A., ... & Doledec, D. (2019). Integrating reproductive and child health services enables access to modern contraception in Sierra Leone. *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 34(2), 701-713.
7. Krämer, S., Möller, J., & Zimmermann, F. (2021). Inclusive education of students with general learning difficulties: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 91(3), 432-478.
8. Lindner, K. T., Schwab, S., Emara, M., & Avramidis, E. (2023). Do teachers favor the inclusion of all students? A systematic review of primary schoolteachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 38(6), 766-787.
9. Mathews, H. M., Lillis, J. L., Bettini, E., Peyton, D. J., Pua, D., Oblath, R., ... & Sutton, R. (2021). Working conditions and special educators' reading instruction for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Exceptional Children*, 87(4), 476-496.
10. Woolfson, L. M. (2024). Is inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities an impossible dream?. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*.
11. Ydo, Y. (2020). Inclusive education: Global priority, collective responsibility. *Prospects*, 49(3), 97-101.